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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appl. No. : 09/976,291  
Applicant : Uwe HEITMANN et al.  
Filed : October 15, 2001  
Art Unit : 1731  
Examiner : Dionne A. Walls

Docket No. : 31653-175416  
Customer No : 26694

Date : August 21, 2003

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**AMENDMENT**

In response to the Office Action dated May 21, 2003, Applicants submit the following Amendment and Reply. The Application is amended as follows:

**Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 2.

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of the claims which begins on page 3.

**Remarks** begin on page 7.

Attachments: a copy of the PTO-1449 filed with the IDS dated October 15, 2001.

No fees are required. However, if the Patent Office deems that any fees are necessary, authorization is hereby granted to charge any required fees to Deposit Account No. 22-0261.